

Mary Gannon, Attorney, Iowa Association of School Boards--Additional Comments

Due to comments made earlier by other speakers, I've added IASB's position on the issues.

Walking quorums – our only concerns with this issue is that there are times when boards need to talk to one another, one-to-one. In most cases, the board president is trying to be proactive on damage control. For example, when there has been an employee involved in a criminal matter over the week-end. The board president will want to notify other board members about the issue so they have a heads up. Since there is no “clean” exception to have this discussion in closed session, the board president will have the conversations one by one. Action is not taken in these discussions and they are truly information that board members need to know.

Publication of Prospective Employees – especially the top administrator of the governmental entity – We currently have a superintendent shortage in Iowa and across the country. By limiting the pool of candidates to those individuals who aren't concerned about disclosure, we severely limit our pool. This will have a chilling effect on applicants. While we understand the other side of the issue, we believe the law should remain as it is and leave it optional for the candidates to make that call. While it could be argued that taxpayers have a right to know who the candidates are, we believe Iowa's children have a stronger right in getting the best leader for their school district.

Sale of Property – we agree with the others who have asked for the exception in the current open meetings law for a closed session for the purchase of property to be expanded to the sale of property. Governmental bodies have as much at stake in getting the best price on a sale of property as they do on the purchase of property.